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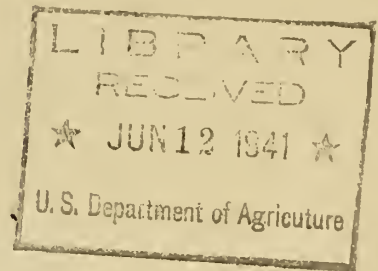
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY
Washington, D. C.

June 6, 1941

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEFS OF BUREAUS



STATEMENT OF POLICY

On November 6, 1940, the Secretary issued a revision of Memorandum 808, setting up a Library Advisory Committee and listing the functions of the Department Librarian as follows:

- "1. To have primary responsibility for general supervision and coordination of all the library work of the Department, both in Washington and in the field.
- "2. To organize the bureau libraries as a part of the Department Library, subject to such modifications or exceptions as the Department Librarian may make in cases where this policy would seriously interfere with the work of the bureau.
- "3. To review all recommendations for appointments to positions in library work in bureaus and offices, both in Washington and in the field. All such recommendations for appointments to positions in library work shall be approved by the Department Librarian prior to the initiation of formal appointment papers.
- "4. To formulate and recommend to the Secretary procedures for review or approval of all orders for books, periodicals, and newspapers for use both in Washington and in the field. Formal procedures under this item shall be established under rules and regulations approved by the Secretary.
- "5. To conduct a periodic examination and evaluation of the operations of library service throughout the Department covering organization, personnel, methods, collections, and other elements involved in library administration."

In order to effect better understanding of the relationship between the Department Library and the bureaus and offices of the Department, the Library Advisory Committee and the Department Librarian offer for your consideration the following interpretation of these functions of the Department Librarian:

1. "To have primary responsibility for general supervision and coordination of all the library work of the Department, both in Washington and in the field" is interpreted to mean full responsibility for the professional and technical aspects of library work. Administrative responsibility for bureau libraries, or other approved library functions within the bureaus, remains a responsibility of the bureaus.

2. "To organize the bureau libraries as part of the Department Library" is interpreted to mean coordination of bureau libraries into a system of libraries, each responsible for a designated subject matter field, so as to avoid duplication of effort and duplication of technical library processes. This would include centralization of cataloging, classification, order work, and similar technical processes which can more efficiently be performed centrally, while strengthening bibliographical and other professional work in the bureau libraries as dynamic aids to the research work of their bureaus. The Department Librarian does not recommend general absorption of bureau libraries into the Main Library.

Under this proposed federation of libraries, each bureau would have administrative responsibility over its bureau library; i.e., would determine the type of library service it wants; the proportion of its budget to be expended on its library service; and would make similar administrative decisions. Professional and technical responsibility for the library would rest with the Department Librarian; i.e., the Department Librarian would have the responsibility for setting subject fields to be covered by each library, as well as library techniques and routines, so that uniform practices may prevail in those cases in which uniform practices are applicable: i.e., in the charging and discharging of books, filing and catalogs, method of bibliographical entry, etc., etc.

The following statement of proposed subject matter fields assigned to bureau libraries is based on the assumption that the bureaus named will be willing to accept full financial responsibility for maintaining collections and staff for adequate research service in the fields noted. It is a statement of primary responsibility and does not mean that copies of some books in these fields may not be made available in other libraries when the demand for them is so great that additional copies are justified:

Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering
Primarily responsible for chemistry and engineering,
except for electrical engineering.

Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Primarily responsible for social sciences,
except for banking, finance, and cooperatives.

Bureau of Animal Industry
Primarily responsible for all animal industry,
except dairy.

Bureau of Dairy Industry
Primarily responsible for dairy industry.

Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine
Primarily responsible for entomology, plant
quarantine, and plant pest control.

Office of Experiment Stations
Primarily responsible for maintaining file of
experiment station and extension publications.

Forest Service
Primarily responsible for forestry.

Bureau of Plant Industry
Primarily responsible for plant industry.

Soil Conservation Service
Primarily responsible for soil conservation.

Farm Credit Administration
Primarily responsible for banking, finance, and
cooperatives.

Rural Electrification Administration
Primarily responsible for electrical engineering.

Solicitor's Office
Primarily responsible for the legal library.

This statement of primary responsibility for subject fields is, of course, subject to modification with changes in the work of the Department.

All other subject fields will be covered by the Department Library.

With respect to library work in field offices, it would appear desirable to set up Department Library branches to serve the staff of the Department at regional centers where general service to all members of the Department is not now available.

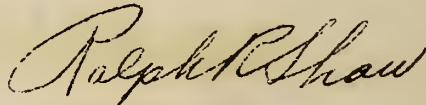
3. "To review all recommendations for appointments to positions in library work" is interpreted to mean review from the point of view of classification of the position and professional qualifications of applicants rather than selection of applicants. The actual selection of any particular candidate from the list of qualified candidates is the concern of the bureau rather than of the Department Librarian.

4. "To formulate and recommend to the Secretary procedures for review or approval of all orders for books, periodicals, and newspapers", etc. is a matter that has concerned the Department since 1914 and earlier. Regulation 4114 and several other regulations now form a fairly complicated pattern for book order work. It is hoped that revision of Regulation 4114 will make for improved, uniform practice in this respect.

5. "To conduct a periodic examination and evaluation of the operations of library service throughout the Department" seems to have been a normal function of the Department Library for some time, and thus calls for no further amplification.

These tentative recommendations are submitted for your consideration and the Library Advisory Committee and the Department Librarian will be very glad to receive your comments upon them.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ralph R. Shaw". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Ralph R. Shaw
Department Librarian